

STAKEHOLDER CONSIDERATION #3

QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATION OF NON-TRADITIONAL PROVIDERS

DESCRIPTION OF THE ISSUE:

Along with many other states, Massachusetts' Waiver Program allows individuals to choose to self-direct their services. This means:

- they have greater control and flexibility over their supports:
- they direct how their individual budget will be spent, based on their Service Plan;
- they select staff to provide their supports that are not part of the traditional service provider network.

CURRENT DMR PRACTICE:

Currently, individuals who are self-directing their supports, can purchase services from either a traditional or non-traditional provider. Traditional providers are generally agencies who hold contracts with DMR. Traditional providers are subject to the DMR licensure and certification process

Non-traditional providers can be individuals or a generic community agency. They are individuals or organizations not licensed or certified by the state as traditional providers. However, there must be a set of standards or qualifications that non-traditional providers meet in order to ensure the health and safety of individuals in the waiver. For example, if an individual wants a neighbor to be their respite provider, standards must exist to ensure that person can safely provide respite care.

WHAT DMR IS PROPOSING:

A standard set of qualifications will be developed for all non-traditional providers. Non-traditional providers not subject to discipline specific licensure or certification requirements must be:

- at least 18 years of age (16 years of age for in-home respite),
- undergo a criminal background check, and
- be trained in the reporting of major incidents and allegations of abuse or neglect.

Exceptions to these requirements must be reviewed and approved by DMR. Additional competencies may be required based on the needs of the individual and will be reviewed and included in the support plan when it is developed. For example, if an individual wants to hire a job developer to help find employment, the team may require that the person have knowledge and experience in interviewing, resume development and job-seeking. The individual will be responsible for certifying that the provider understands and can execute these requirements.

Non-traditional providers may be "qualified" to support one individual, or may be "qualified" to provide supports to a number of different individuals.

CRITICAL THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- What services can be delivered by non-traditional providers?
- What kind of training and qualifications should non-traditional providers have?
- Who is responsible for assuring that non-traditional providers are qualified to provide services?